

May 5, 2023: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women and Indigenous Relatives Awareness Day

The Michigan Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention and Treatment Board is honored to recognize May 5 as a day to raise awareness of missing and murdered Indigenous Women and Indigenous Relatives. To recognize and pay tribute to the lives and legacies of murdered and missing Indigenous Women and Indigenous Relatives, the Board issued the following proclamation:

WHEREAS, the Michigan Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention and Treatment Board (the Board) is an independent, legislatively created, seven-member Governor appointed Board housed in the Division of Victim Services of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services that is charged with funding sexual assault and domestic violence services for Victims and providing policy recommendations on the issues of domestic violence and sexual assault;

WHEREAS, countless under-reported, under-investigated, and unsolved cases of missing and murdered Indigenous Women and Girls continue to swell in the United States with little federal or state effort or financial resources dedicated to resolving the systemic failures surrounding the disproportionate violence against Indigenous Women and Girls

WHEREAS, investigation into cases of missing and murdered Indigenous Women and Girls is made difficult for Tribal Law Enforcement Agencies due to a lack of resources and the complex jurisdictional scheme that exists in Indian Country;

WHEREAS, four out of five American Indian and Alaska Native Women have experienced violence in their life, and ninety percent of these Victims report being victimized by a non-Indian perpetrator;

WHEREAS, murder is the third leading cause of death for Native American Women on Tribal lands;

WHEREAS, gender-based violence, including sexual assault and physical violence, is committed against 78% -85% of Indigenous Two Spirit individuals;

WHEREAS, murdered and missing Indigenous Women are undercounted in urban areas where most Native Women live as a result of long-standing U.S. policies, including those directed with the purpose of assimilation;

WHEREAS, greater resources must be committed to providing Traditional culturally honoring programs, services, support, advocacy, and care that Indigenous Survivors – whether living on Tribal lands, in urban areas, or other locations – have stated are necessary for their safety, healing and empowerment;

WHEREAS, the Michigan Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention and Treatment Board remembers these Indigenous Relatives whose cases remain unsolved or inequitably handled and seeks to elevate their voices and promote healing throughout Native Nations and Communities;

WHEREAS, the Michigan Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention and Treatment Board honors the numerous Tribal Advocates who include the loved ones of Indigenous Women who are missing and Indigenous Women who have been murdered, including where killers have gone unpunished or not received equitable punishment, and allies who have made countless sacrifices over decades to raise awareness about the epidemic of violence against Indigenous Women along with those who have refused to be silenced in the face of the failures to even record the thousands of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women throughout the U.S.;

WHEREAS, the Michigan Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention and Treatment Board honors and includes all Indigenous Relatives – Girls, Boys, LGBTIQ and Two Spirit Relatives, Women, and Men – who are Missing and Murdered at epidemic proportions for whom we must advocate for inclusion in identifying these Missing Relatives and bringing to justice those who have murdered Indigenous Relatives;

WHEREAS, the Michigan and Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention and Treatment Board honors the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Movement and includes all Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives by using MMIW&IR for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Indigenous Relatives;

WHEREAS, the Michigan Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention and Treatment Board desires to raise awareness of this crisis with governments that have the power to partner with Tribal Governments, develop policies and procedures, and allocate proportional resources, to reduce, investigate, and justly adjudicate all incidents of violence perpetrated against Indigenous Women and Indigenous Relatives;

WHEREAS, the Michigan Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention and Treatment Board unites in solidarity with Native Nations, regional, state, and national governments and organizations in support of educating about the epidemic of violence against Indigenous Women and Indigenous Relatives, engage in efforts to document all Missing Indigenous Women and Indigenous Relatives, and support Indigenous Survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking through Traditional culturally honoring programs, services, and support;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Michigan Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention and Treatment Board supports May 5th as the Day for Awareness of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Indigenous Relatives.